



136 Porter's Pass

1800

Federal style

Norman Porter (1789-1863) & Abby Galpin

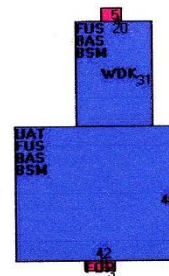
Richard Murray (1845-1910) & Ellen Butler (1844-1899)

Berlin Historical Society member says that house was built in 1840.

2018 Town of Berlin GIS Index.

1800 current owner: Daniel Urlage

Sketch



Genealogy

Samuel Porter 1750-1838 married Mindwell Griswold 1760-1810. Their children include: Samuel, Nathaniel, Mindwell, Almira, Laura, Norman, Joanna, Chloe, and Sophia. They lived in the Rev. Burnham home. Samuel married second to Elizabeth Hart Percival (1769-1846), widow of Dr. Percival and mother of James Gates Percival.

From Catherine North's History of Berlin, Connecticut pages 106-111

"Norman Porter 1789-1863, son of Samuel Porter and Mindwell Griswold, married in 1823 to Abby Galpin 1796-, daughter of Col. Joseph Galpin. Their wedding journey was to Lexington, Kentucky. They rode first by stage, then over the mountains on the backs of mules. The return trip was on horseback. Norman in his business as a merchant in Lexington, made a fortune. When Norman returned he planned to build a fine new home on the old homestead site. His sisters who loved the place begged him to move the house and to please them he consented. The carpenter advised against moving the house as the house was so old it would not 'pay'. Mr Porter asked: Can you move it? Yes said the carpenter. Mr. Porter said, Then move it! It is none of your business whether it will pay or not. The way was narrow and the house was wide so it stuck fast in the road and remained there several weeks, Finally it landed in the new site. The sisters liked to go and look over the rooms but finally came the day when they stopped going to the old house. A carpenter persuaded them to let him take the west half of the house as he said there was lumber enough to build another house. It was said that the lumber was of no use and the proportions of the old house were ruined.

Mr. Porter was a fine looking man, erect of carriage, and gentlemanly in bearing; quick of step, energetic and full of business; always doing something or going somewhere. It is said that he went to Hartford

nearly every day. His farm which he adored was cultivated for pleasure not for profit. Here were found all the new fruits and flowers – and laborsaving inventions. Japonicas bloomed in the windows, tulips, lilies, and strange new shrubs bordered the walks. Grapes, Isabellas and Catawbas, climbed over arbors; Bartlett pears and Seekels grew in the garden, a delicious revelation to the neighbors, who were welcome to take grafts. Children who had never seen strawberries growing except in fields, heard with wonder that over at Mr. Porter's there were beds of cultivated strawberries which were so full that they were left to decay on the vines. Another neighbor told of the consternation when Uncle Norman cooked and ate the fruit of the tomato he had brought home from Kentucky. Norman Porter ate the first tomato in town. South of the house was a hot-bed filled in the spring with green growing things.

There was a patent gate at the driveway, west of the house, that opened and closed automatically by a series of levers underneath, as the horses stepped upon and off the platform, that slanted down to the ground in either side.

When Mr. Porter heard that a man in Windsor had a wonderful new breed of cows, he took his friend Cyrus Root and drove up to see the cows and the butter. Not long afterward a herd of twenty or thirty of those cows were grazing in the pastures on the Porter farm.

The field south of the Christian Lane schoolhouse came into possession of Mr. Porter and when he was about 60 years old he planted it full of apple trees. When asked why at his time of life he should set out apple trees, he replied, I expect to live to send fruit from this orchard to Queen Victoria. He did live to gather a bountiful harvest of apples from what came to be known as the prize orchard in the state. Cyrus Root Jr gives a list of the variety of apples, all grown in the orchard. It includes the Baldwins, Peck's Pleasant, Roxbury Russet, Hubbardston's Nonesuch, Belden, Sweet, Yellow Bell-flower, Gravenstein, Sweet Russet, and Rhode Island Greening. There were also Porter and spice apples there.

Mr. Porter was fond of children. He even allowed them to swing on the patent gate. On Sundays the Porter horses always knew that they were to stop and add to their load any woman or child walking toward the village church.

In his zeal for town and village improvement, Mr. Porter sometimes gave offense by urging people beyond their inclinations.

Mr. Porter supported the Berlin Congregational Church in their building efforts.

Norman Porter died in 1863 at age 73 and is buried in the Bridge Cemetery."

Berlin notes record that he was always interested in town affairs and a good man to have in the Community. Around 1846 he had valuable apple orchards in Berlin. Joined Berlin Congregational with wife by certificate 3 MAY 1840. BPLH Card Notes record that he contributed to Berlin Congregational Church building fund. Norman died at age 73. Brandegee - p.19, 43 North - p.106, 110, 117 Berlin Congregational Church Records - p.53 Hale - p.47

Norman Porter (1789-1863) son of Samuel Porter & Mindwell Griswold. In 1823 he married Abby Galpin (1796-) daughter of Joseph Galpin & Rhoda Guersney. They had a son named Norman. Norman is buried in Bridge Cemetery. Abby moved to Kentucky with her son.

Richard Murray obtained the house.

Richard Murray was born in 1845 in Ireland, son of Thomas Murray & Ellen Flynn. He immigrated between 1858-1862. He married Ellen Butler. Ellen was born in Ireland in 1844. The family were members of St Paul's Church. They had children: Mary, Alice, Kate, Thomas, Adelia, Richard, and Josephine.

Richard Murray owned a brickyard. It is said that he could see the brickyard from any of the windows of his house. The small ponds near Stop and Shop are the water filled brick pits. His bricks were labeled RMBCo.

Ellen died in 1899 and is buried in New Britain's St. Mary's Cemetery. He died in 1910 and is buried in New Britain's St. Mary's Cemetery.

Murray Heights is named in his honor and is the site of his brickyard.



